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N. VET NAM

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20 September 1965

BRIEFING NOTES

NORTH VIETNAM

(Map, SAM Sites in North Vietnam)

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I. The current status of North Vietnamese surface-to-air missile defenses is as follows: 19 sites have been confirmed and four others are carried as possible on

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✓ A. Of the 19 confirmed sites, no more than six have been operational at any one time. This is based

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✓ B. In addition there are a number of mobile SAM units operating in North Vietnam. In the DRV coastal region around the city of Thanh Hoa, two USN fighters evaded missiles fired from a mobile unit on September 5. Another mobile unit is believed operating in the Laos border area 60 to 70 miles southwest of Hanoi. A flight of USAF fighter-bombers was fired upon and missed by a missile unit in that vicinity on September 9th. Armed

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II. We have lost three manned aircraft and two drones to surface-to-air missiles. One drone was shot down south of Hanoi on September 19. The last manned aircraft lost to a missile was on August 24th.

A. The missile batteries are increasingly active, however. Since September 4, there have been at least 14 SAM incidents over North Vietnam which did not, fortunately, result in any shootdown.

C. On September 20, for the first time, our strike aircraft went after the important railway line from Hanoi to Lang Son. This rail line plays a significant role in the delivery of military goods from China to North Vietnam, and we have been predicting that it would be vigorously defended.

D. The attack was aimed at the Cao Nung railway bridge and the highway bridge adjacent to the rail line, near Kep northeast of Hanoi. MIG jet fighters were airborne during the attack, but we have not yet determined how near they were to our strike aircraft, or whether they attempted an intercept.

E. What our pilots did run into was a substantial barrage of surface-to-air missiles. Two A-4 Skyhawks of the US Navy reported three missiles, two of which skinned by the flight leader,

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✓ The wingman escaped the two missiles by evasive maneuvering; one missile exploded at about 15,000 feet, and the second on impact with the ground. The third missile passed behind the flight. Other pilots on the strike mission reported six other missile explosions. The only aircraft lost during the attack, however, was brought down by ground fire, and the pilot was rescued by helicopter in good condition.

V. We have not yet located the site or sites from which these missiles were fired.

✓ F. No direct hits were reported on the highway bridge, but the railroad bridge, in the language of the air force, had one span "displaced 15 to 20 feet to the right, making it unserviceable."

✓ III. North Vietnamese crews are now taking part in the missile launches. This may account for the number of near-misses

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✓ A. The Soviet Union is assuming a growing responsibility for the air defense of North Vietnam, not only manning missile sites, but training North Vietnamese fighter pilots on an increasing scale. There are probably 2,000 Soviet military personnel in North Vietnam now in various technical and advisory capacities.

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